

## WORK OF HON. MR. CROSS.

The work was well done all round. The one lawyer of the Ministry, Mr. C. W. Cross, a man in his early thirties, soon showed that the government did not mean to palter with "interests" which conceived themselves powerful to affect votes. He solved the long-neglected problem of compelling the C. P. R. Co. to pay taxes. He smashed a strong "lumber combine," thus freeing the prairie settlers from the heavy incubus of high prices for monopolized house-building material. He enforced law and order over the vast tract so perfectly that Alberta is a model Province in that most important respect. He abolished saloons, and reduced the number of urban and rural licenses so greatly that temptation to drink is very little before the young or old. He took up the Dominion Government's "Sunday Act," and made it just as perfectly binding on railways as on grog-dealing drug stores and laundrymen. The "bad man" was everywhere defied, jumped on, scrunched, hammered, run out. A huge region of frontier is there as peaceful as Commonwealth Avenue.

With much ingenuity a smart tax on the unoccupied lands of speculators was so levied that it applies provincially only outside of school districts, while any such land in the school districts has to pay to the school. A novel law compels in Alberta the registration of agreements for land sales, thus stopping some rogues in the practice of selling the same tract more than once, giving several deeds, and then skimming with the proceeds. Excellent Mechanics' Lien and Compensation for Injuries Acts were established, so that the unpaid or the injured can, and do get, speedy remedy. New district courts and connected officials bring justice actively to every part. Industrial schools for the juvenile misdeed or criminal were set up promptly, public charities created, though there is small need for them, and every appropriate item of advanced civilization brought into effective action.

## TAXES ON C. P. R. LANDS.

Finally the young Attorney-General has taken up the very important business of compelling the C. P. R. to pay taxes on its wild lands. Twenty-five million acres were granted to that company by way of subsidy, about 1880. These lands were not to be taxed locally during twenty years from grant. When the local authorities of the prairies tried to tax the C. P. R. holdings the company pleaded that such collection was barred until 20 years after each separate section or tract had been patented to them by the Crown. This contention was held good by the judicial committee of the British Privy Council, Canada's final court of appeal. Mr. Cross has since gone into the whole question. He believes that the case vs. the C. P. R. was not duly presented. He has a lot of new points, and will bring them